

# Western States Pact

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The **Western States Pact** is an interstate agreement between five western states in the United States to coordinate the rollback of economic restrictions implemented by the state governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Contents

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**Agreement**

**Parties**

**Reactions**

**See also**

**References**

## Agreement

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In announcing the Western States Pact on April 13, 2020, California, Oregon and Washington governors Gavin Newsom, Kate Brown, and Jay Inslee jointly announced that "COVID-19 doesn't follow state or national boundaries. It will take every level of government, working together, and a full picture of what's happening on the ground."<sup>[1]</sup>




The agreement was made with four goals:

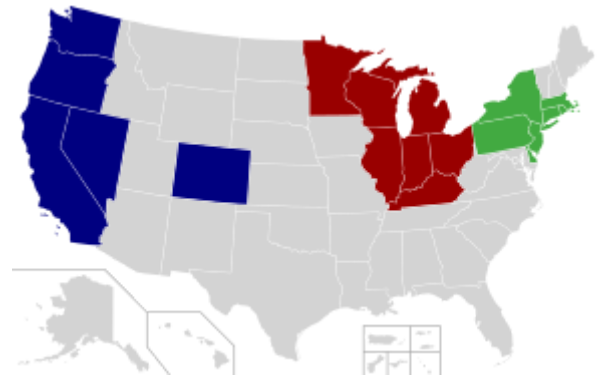
- Protecting populations that are vulnerable (such as those in senior homes)
- Maintaining an acceptable supply of personal protective equipment in hospitals
- Mitigating poverty and unavailability of healthcare caused by the pandemic
- Connecting the rollback of economic restrictions with a method to track the transmission of the virus<sup>[2]</sup>

On April 27, Colorado governor Jared Polis and Nevada governor Steve Sisolak announced their states would join the Western State Pact with the latter noting the importance of information sharing.<sup>[3]</sup> On April 30, research and education networks from the states involved, such as the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research's Front Range GigaPop, Nevada System of Higher Education's NevadaNet, CENIC, Link Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest Gigapop, announced they would be joining the shared approach under the Western States Pact and would be offering ultra-broadband research and education telecommunications networks and services to support the Western States Pact.<sup>[4]</sup> On May 11, the Western States Pact released a letter, signed by the governors and state legislative leaders of all five states, to Congress requesting \$1 trillion in aid to help deal with the financial effects of the coronavirus. The letter states that the aid would "preserve core government services like public health, public safety, public education and help people get back to work. It would help our states and cities come out of this crisis stronger and more resilient."<sup>[5][6]</sup>

## Parties

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State	Governor	Accession
 <a href="#">California</a>	<a href="#">Gavin Newsom</a>	April 13, 2020
 <a href="#">Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Jared Polis</a>	April 27, 2020
 <a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">Steve Sisolak</a>	April 27, 2020
 <a href="#">Oregon</a>	<a href="#">Kate Brown</a>	April 13, 2020
 <a href="#">Washington</a>	<a href="#">Jay Inslee</a>	April 13, 2020
Sources: <sup>[7]</sup> <sup>[8]</sup>		



The member states of the Western States Pact are shaded in blue

## Reactions

Shortly after the Western States Pact and northeastern states announced their own joint plans on April 13, 2020, U.S. president [Donald Trump](#) asserted his "total authority" over the states' decisions about when to lift the shutdowns implemented in response to the pandemic.<sup>[9]</sup> After criticism from both [Democratic](#) and [Republican](#) members of Congress, Trump clarified on April 14 that he would be "authorizing each individual governor of each individual state to implement a reopening" of their economy. However, [Cornell Law School](#) professor Kathleen Bergin said, "Trump has no authority...These are matters for states to decide under...the [Tenth Amendment to the Constitution](#)."<sup>[10]</sup>

After Hawaiian business leaders and state House Speaker [Scott Saiki](#) encouraged joining the Western States Pact, governor [David Ige](#) said he considered joining the pact but decided not to because Hawaii did not share a land boundary with the member states of the pact.<sup>[11]</sup>

## See also

- [Economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [U.S. state and local government response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

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